

Collaborative Micro-Residencies

Location-Based Virtual Reality: Navigating and Designing Access

A paid opportunity (£1k) for eight people to spend approx four days spread over three months with in Bristol as part of a project where you will collaborate on researching and designing accessibility in location-based VR experiences.

VR technology and experiences have mostly been designed without the input and collaboration of Disabled people and we recognise the technology in its current form is inaccessible to many by design. ***This residency is for those who identify as Disabled. No prior experience or knowledge about VR is required, just an active interest.***

These Micro-Residencies are part of a project called [STREAM](#), which is a partnership between UWE, Marshmallow Laser Feast and All Seeing Eye. The aim is to investigate and navigate what accessible location-based VR could look like.



Overview

The Micro-Residencies will be funded at £1000 per person. Over three months there will be three half day workshops to explore, navigate and critically analyse current accessibility of location-based VR, reimagining how it could be designed.

Micro-Residents will work with a researcher and an Access Producer and have access to the Pervasive Media Studio and its facilities in the Watershed. We will seek to fund all access needs which will be discussed in an initial meeting.

This document contains information about the opportunity, eligibility and the application process. If you have any access requirements that mean this document does not work for you, please contact Vanessa Bellaar Spruijt on myworld@watershed.co.uk.

These Micro-Residencies are part of the the MyWorld IDEAS programme, funded by UKRI.



Image:UWE MA Virtual Extended Realities

The Micro-Residencies

Location-Based Virtual Reality: Navigating and Designing Access

During a period of three months there will be three half day workshops to explore location-based VR, ask questions about it and reimagine how it could be designed. The sessions will be led by researcher [Clarice Hilton](#).

These Micro-Residencies are part of a collaborative research project and the sessions will be led by researcher [Clarice Hilton](#) with support from an Access Producer. The aim is to investigate and navigate what accessible location-based VR could look like and what some of the current issues to navigate are.

VR technology and experiences have mostly been designed without the input and collaboration of Disabled people and we recognise the technology in its current form is inaccessible to many. In these workshops we aim to collectively interrogate VR and what might need to change about the technology for it to be truly accessible. This is a participatory research and co-design project, the exact nature of what is explored will be decided by the cohort of Micro-Residents.

The outputs will be communicated to the wider STREAM team to guide the design of the tools they are making and future VR experiences. The findings and insights will also be shared with the wider community. The hope is that these workshops can give insight into how to centre Disability in the design of location-based VR experiences.

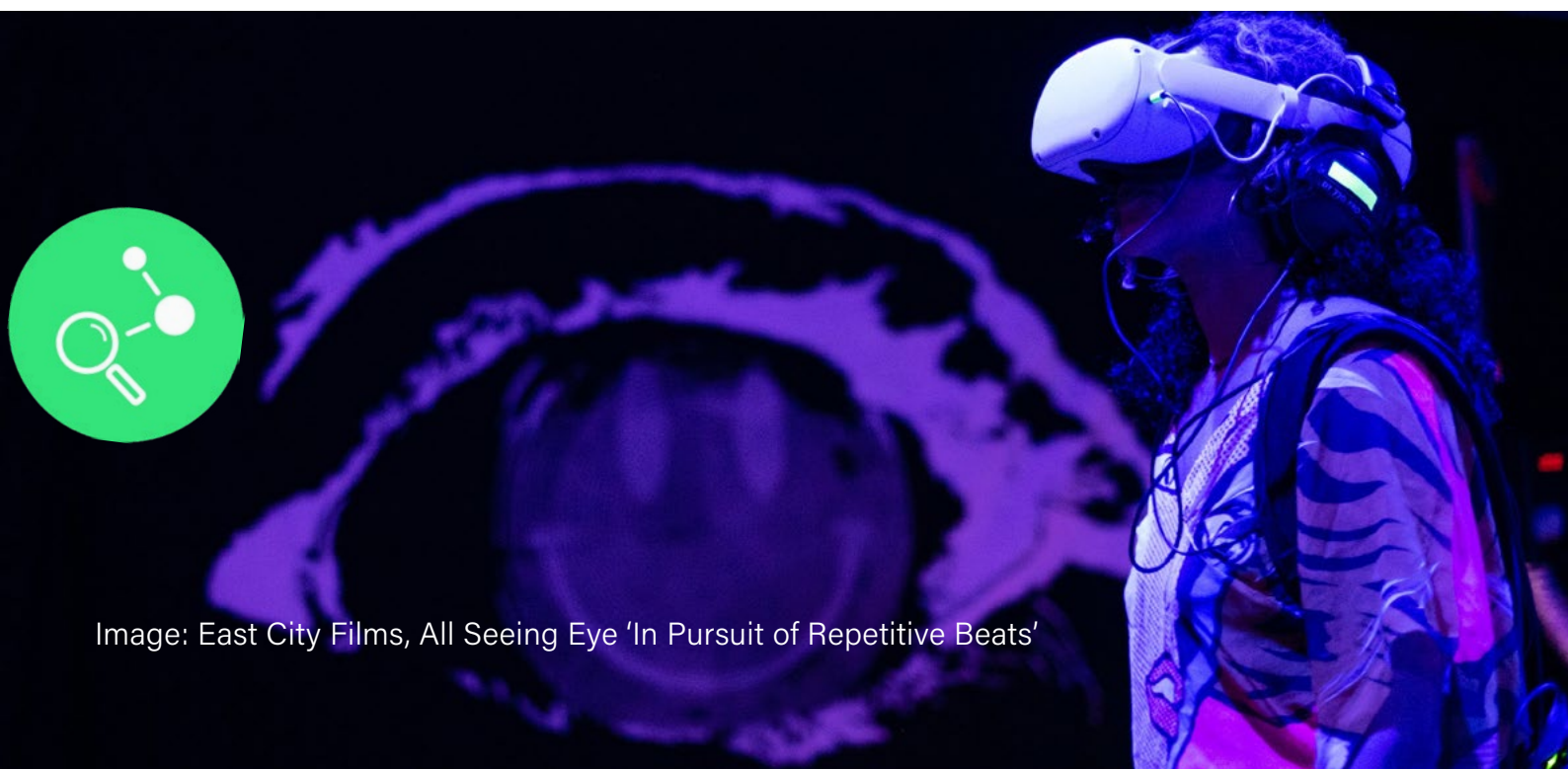


Image: East City Films, All Seeing Eye 'In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats'

The Micro-Residencies (continued)

Eligibility criteria

- You identify as Disabled (including D/Deaf and neurodivergent)
- You are available for all workshop dates as listed in the timeline below
- You live in the West of England region

Timeline

- Closing date for expressions of interest:
Monday 11 September 2023 **at 10.00a.m.** (BST)
- Applicants will hear from us by end of:
Tuesday 12 September 2023
- 30 minute induction and access calls:
Between 13 - 15 September 2023
- Contracting:
October/November 2023
- Start date:
2 October 2023
- End date:
2 January 2024

Workshops

- First workshop:
between: 2 - 8th October 2023
- Second workshop:
17th October 2023
- Third workshop:
21st November 2023
- Final event:
December 2023 date tbc



What do we expect from you?

- Collaboration during the three workshops in person or pre-agreed remote access.
- Open and collaborative approach to the collective project.
- Honest analysis of the technology and process.
- You will contribute to the outcomes that are documented as part of the research process and shareable for wider learning.

What do you get?

- A grant of £1000 covering the workshops, event and 1 to 1 session and some reflection outside of the workshops.
- Funded access support.
- For the duration of MyWorld's programme: Desk space and access to facilities in the Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed in Bristol, connecting you to a vibrant community of over 180 artists and creative technologists. This excludes funded access provision. For more information about access provision in our building and the PM Studio see: <https://www.watershed.co.uk/studio/about/visit-access>.
- Any published research from this Residency will name you (with consent) as an author and collaborator.



Image: Pervasive Media Studio

How to apply

Step 1

You submit an Expression of Interest (see below). This is a short form in which you fill in your contact details and complete some eligibility tick boxes. These are to confirm that:

- You identify as Disabled (including D/Deaf and neurodivergent)
- You are available on all workshop dates as listed in the timeline on page 4.
- You live in the West of England region.

Step 2

We will randomly (and anonymously) select eight eligible submissions and use shuffled numbered tickets to do this.

You can read more about our thinking behind the random selection process [here](#), or: <https://www.watershed.co.uk/studio/news/2023/02/15/reflections-random-selection>

Step 3

Eight selected applicants will be notified and we will invite you for an induction discussion and organise access provision and contract via Watershed. If you decide not to participate at this stage we will randomly select another applicant.

Apply here:

<https://wshd.to/microstreamapplication>

Talk to Us

If you have any questions or if you have any access requirements that mean this document or the expression of interest form does not work for you, please address your email to Clarice Hilton on myworld@watershed.co.uk

Closing date: Monday 11 September 2023, 10.00 a.m.



About the STREAM project

STREAM is developed by Marshmallow Laser Feast, All Seeing Eye and The VR Lab at the Digital Cultures Research Centre, University of the West of England (UWE Bristol).

The University of the West of England (UWE) is a university focused on solving future global challenges through outstanding learning, world-leading research and a culture of enterprise. The research lead for this project is Verity McIntosh, Senior Lecturer in Virtual and Extended Realities, member of UWE's Digital Cultures Research Centre, and Director of the university's VR Lab.

Marshmallow Laser Feast is an experiential art collective working in the liminal space between art, technology and the natural world. The collective creates specific visual languages that expand perception and inform our lived experiences. Their approach has earned them a reputation for creating the seemingly impossible—for producing experiences that push boundaries, redefine expectations and excite audiences worldwide. All Seeing Eye is a highly regarded team of designers, artists and engineers who build unparalleled immersive and communal experiences. They have worked unrelentingly in the industry for over 15 years, developing highly meaningful and impactful immersive work.



Image: Paul McGeiver, Marshmallow Laser Feast 'Evolver'

About Pervasive Media Studio and Watershed

[Watershed](#) is a cultural organisation focussed on togetherness. We produce accessible and inclusive experiences that fire up the imagination in our venue, online and across the world. We are recognised internationally as a leading centre for film culture, art and technology practice, and talent development programmes. Our values sit at the heart of everything we do, both creative and operational. With an ethos of responsibility and kindness, we produce and deliver support which is more than the sum of its parts.

[The Pervasive Media Studio](#) hosts a brilliant community of over 180 artists, creative companies, technologists and academics exploring experience design and creative technology. We have an open plan studio with a culture of generosity, curiosity and interruptability. We believe that by clustering together people from a broad range of backgrounds, with differing skills, experiences and opinions, all of our ideas get better.

It is a collaboration between Watershed, University of Bristol and UWE Bristol.

About MyWorld

Watershed and the Pervasive Media Studio are part of a programme called [MyWorld](#) which will showcase the latest advances in digital production and research.

Led by the University of Bristol, the aim of MyWorld is to position the West of England as an international trailblazer in creative media production and technology, through forging dynamic collaborations between academia and industry to progress technological innovation, deliver creative excellence, establish and operate state of the art facilities, offer skills training and drive inward investment, in order to raise the region's profile on the global stage.

MyWorld is funded through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) 'Strength in Places fund'

Main Delivery partners: University of Bristol, University of the West of England, University of Bath, Bath Spa University, Watershed, Digital Catapult, Aardman Animations, Lux Aeterna, Esprit Film and Television, Bristol Old Vic and Opposable Games.

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